

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9242

To require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on the recovery of certain United States nationals, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2026

Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona (for himself, Mr. MESSMER, and Mr. MILLS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on the recovery of certain United States nationals, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “No American Left Be-
5 hind Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REPORT ON RECOVERY**
7 **OF CERTAIN UNITED STATES NATIONALS.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The United States has a longstanding obli-
2 gation and commitment to recover, account for, and
3 repatriate its citizens who are held hostage, unlaw-
4 fully detained, or otherwise unaccounted for abroad.

5 (2) United States nationals have been held cap-
6 tive, unlawfully detained, or killed in areas of cur-
7 rent or recent United States military operations in
8 the Middle East and Africa, particularly in Syria,
9 Iraq, and Afghanistan, with some cases remaining
10 unresolved.

11 (3) The recent successful recovery of isolated
12 personnel, including the recent daring rescue of
13 downed United States aircrew in Iran, demonstrates
14 the unstoppable effectiveness of coordinated Amer-
15 ican military, intelligence, and interagency capabili-
16 ties.

17 (4) The recent successful releases of United
18 States nationals wrongfully detained abroad dem-
19 onstrate that relentless and coordinated diplomatic
20 engagement, supported by economic and strategic le-
21 verage, can decisively enable successful recovery out-
22 comes.

23 (5) The Department of Defense plays a critical
24 role in supporting interagency hostage recovery ef-
25 forts pursuant to the Robert Levinson Hostage Re-

1 covery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act (22
2 U.S.C. 1741 et seq.), including as a key participant
3 in the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell.

4 (6) The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Spe-
5 cial Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict serves as
6 the Department's policy lead for personnel recovery,
7 and United States Special Operations Command
8 serves as the operational lead for hostage rescue
9 missions.

10 (7) The recovery of deceased United States na-
11 tionals and the repatriation of their remains is a sol-
12 emn and enduring obligation of the United States
13 Government.

14 (8) The consistent and credible application of
15 diplomatic, economic, and military leverage can deter
16 adversaries and non-state actors from targeting
17 United States nationals for unlawful detention, hos-
18 tage-taking, or harm.

19 (9) Changes in force posture, intelligence ac-
20 cess, partner coordination, and operational presence
21 can significantly affect the likelihood of successful
22 recovery, remains repatriation, and accountability
23 outcomes.

24 (10) Certain partner nations maintain institu-
25 tional frameworks prioritizing the recovery and repa-

1 triation of their citizens, including efforts that con-
2 tinue years after hostilities have ended.

3 (11) Congress has a responsibility to ensure
4 that recovery, repatriation, and accountability con-
5 siderations are incorporated as a core mission in de-
6 fense planning, contingency operations, and inter-
7 agency coordination, with the objective that no
8 American is left behind.

9 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
10 gress that the United States should maintain a sustained
11 and coordinated commitment to the recovery, repatriation,
12 and accountability of United States nationals held hos-
13 tage, unlawfully detained, or otherwise unaccounted for
14 abroad, and should evaluate the feasibility of establishing
15 a formal, enduring “No American Left Behind” doctrine
16 to guide such efforts.

17 (c) REPORT.—

18 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days
19 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
20 retary of Defense shall submit to the congressional
21 defense committees a report on the support by the
22 Department of Defense for the recovery, repatri-
23 ation, and accountability of United States nationals
24 abroad.

1 (2) SCOPE.—The report required under para-
2 graph (1) shall address cases involving United
3 States nationals who are deceased, unlawfully de-
4 tained, missing, or of unresolved status, including in
5 areas of current or recent United States military op-
6 erations in the Middle East and Africa, and particu-
7 larly in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

8 (3) ELEMENTS.—The report required under
9 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10 (A) An assessment of how the interaction
11 between the Assistant Secretary of Defense for
12 Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict
13 and the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell informs
14 contingency planning for the rescue or recovery
15 of United States nationals in areas of hos-
16 tilities.

17 (B) An assessment of how the geographic
18 combatant commands incorporate the rescue or
19 recovery of United States nationals into oper-
20 ational plans, the effect of such contingency
21 missions on force requirements, and how such
22 planning accounts for effects on intelligence col-
23 lection, detainee access, and recovery or ac-
24 countability options resulting from changes in
25 force posture or operational presence.

1 (C) The criteria that must be met for the
2 Department to recommend the use of military
3 assets to execute a rescue or personnel recovery
4 of detained United States nationals in a poten-
5 tial hostile area, including how such criteria dif-
6 fer in areas where the United States does not
7 maintain permanent or temporary military in-
8 frastructure.

9 (D) An assessment of how the Department
10 maintains intelligence and situational awareness
11 on detained United States nationals in areas
12 where the United States no longer has a mili-
13 tary presence.

14 (E) An identification of any statutory au-
15 thority, policy constraint, intelligence limitation,
16 or resource gap affecting the ability of the De-
17 partment to support such efforts, including rec-
18 ommendations to address such gaps and an as-
19 sessment of whether existing authorities suffi-
20 ciently authorize the Department to condition
21 or sequence detainee transfers, releases, or
22 partner detention arrangements considering on-
23 going United States recovery, intelligence, or
24 accountability equities, including an identifica-
25 tion of factors that have supported or con-

1 strained successful recovery outcomes in recent
2 cases.

3 (F) An assessment of best practices em-
4 ployed by partner nations with established doc-
5 trines prioritizing the recovery, repatriation,
6 and accountability of detained or deceased citi-
7 zens, including efforts conducted years after
8 hostilities.

9 (G) An assessment of the feasibility and
10 operational implications of establishing a for-
11 mal, enduring, doctrine of the Department of
12 Defense, to be referred to as the “No American
13 Left Behind” doctrine, and of integrating such
14 doctrine into operational and contingency plan-
15 ning, resource allocation, detainee policy consid-
16 erations, and interagency coordination.

17 (H) A detailed assessment of case-specific
18 Department of Defense support equities related
19 to cases of deceased United States nationals
20 whose remains have not been recovered, as well
21 as cases involving United States nationals who
22 are wrongfully detained, missing, or of unre-
23 solved status, as appropriate, including in
24 Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and select areas of Af-

1 rica associated with counterterrorism oper-
2 ations.

3 (4) FORM.—The report required under para-
4 graph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form,
5 but may include a classified annex with respect to
6 the element specified in paragraph (3)(H).

7 (d) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DE-
8 FINED.—In this section, the term “congressional defense
9 committees” has the meaning given that term in section
10 101 of title 10, United States Code.

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